

CBS 2 Chicago, March 5, 2007

(CBS) CHICAGO Imagine being allowed to repeatedly bypass airport security – no metal detectors or bag checks. That's what CBS 2 Investigators exposed in their ongoing series "Fly At Your Own Risk."

Transportation Security Administration officials are talking to CBS 2 Investigator Dave Savini.

The TSA's federal security director at O'Hare International Airport is reacting to 2 Investigators' series of reports exposing missing employee identification badges and the access they can get you.

"What was shown on television was a concern," said Kathleen Petrowsky. "We will definitely look at opportunities to improve security."

Petrowsky says an investigation is underway following our exclusive undercover probe that exposed 3,760 missing airport employee badges, called SIDA badges.

Those badges allow workers into a back gate where vehicles are not checked, then into secure areas of the airport where workers and their bags are not screened for weapons.

"Based on the footage that was shown on television that reflected a security concern there's no doubt about that," Petrowsky, a deputy federal security director for the TSA, said.

Petrowsky is concerned about how CBS 2 was able to get a hidden camera onto the tarmac, under airplanes, through an open door and into the terminal without ever being searched or questioned.

"The TSA is working cooperatively with the Department of aviation to look into the issues raised by your story and through collaboration with the department we will make sure those issues are addressed," she said.

Petrowsky says she cannot talk specifically about what's being done to address these and other failures.

CBS 2 Investigators had also exposed badges belonging to terminated employees that were missing and would remain active – and could be used for weeks, even months, when they should have been inactivated.

These badges are controlled by the Chicago Department of Aviation. The TSA regulates them.

"The issues that you raised in your prior story are all of concern to the TSA so we are looking into all aspects of what you raised in your story," Petrowsky said.

Meanwhile she wants to assure travelers the airport is safe. The TSA demonstrated its recent increased use of roving patrols to inspect badged workers with bomb sniffing dogs.

In other action, Congressman Mark Kirk has proposed federal legislation to fine airport contractors that do not collect badges from terminated employees.

In Springfield, state lawmakers began holding hearings last week. The TSA and Chicago Department of Aviation officials have been asked to testify this week.

CBS 2 will continue to bring you the latest developments.